

BC 3468

United States Department of the Interior  
National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

1. Name of Property

Historic Name: Ennis Commercial Historic District (amendment to increase boundary)  
Other name/site number: NA  
Name of related multiple property listing: Historic Resources of Ennis, Texas

2. Location

Street & number: 205 N. McKinney St., 301-303 W. Knox St., and 107 N. Sherman St.  
City or town: Ennis State: Texas County: Ellis  
Not for publication:  NA Vicinity:  NA

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this  
(  nomination  request for determination of eligibility) meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the  
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my  
opinion, the property (  meets  does not meet) the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:  
 national  statewide  local

Applicable National Register Criteria:  A  B  C  D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer 1/28/19  
Signature of certifying official / Title Date  
Texas Historical Commission  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property  meets  does not meet the National Register criteria.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of commenting or other official Date  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register.
- removed from the National Register
- other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

[Signature] 3/6/2019  
Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

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**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

**Category of Property**

<input type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

**Number of Resources within Property**

Contributing	Noncontributing	
3	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
3	2	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 59 in original district  
 0 in boundary increase area

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions:** (unchanged from previous nomination and amendment); Government/post office

**Current Functions:** (unchanged from nomination and amendment); Government/post office; Work in Progress; Vacant/Not in Use

**7. Description**

**Architectural Classification:** Late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Revivals: Beaux Arts  
 Modern Movement: New Formalism  
 No Style

**Principal Exterior Materials:** Brick, concrete

**Narrative Description** (see continuation sheets 6-10)

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## 8. Statement of Significance

**Applicable National Register Criteria:** A, C

**Criteria Considerations:** NA

**Areas of Significance:** Commerce, Architecture (unchanged from previous nominations)

**Period of Significance:** 1883-1966 (as revised in 2016)

**Significant Dates:** 1883, 1891, 1915, 1966

**Significant Person** (only if criterion b is marked): NA

**Cultural Affiliation** (only if criterion d is marked): NA

**Architect/Builder:** Wenderoth, Oscar, architect; Taylor, Volney E., builder; Geren, Preston M., architect;  
James T. Taylor and Son, builder; unknown

**Narrative Statement of Significance** (see continuation sheets 11-18)

## 9. Major Bibliographic References

**Bibliography** (see continuation sheets 19-20)

**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested. (Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Bldg., approved 2018)
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other --

**Historic Resources Survey Number** (if assigned): NA

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### 10. Geographical Data

**Acreege of Property:** Approximately 3 acres in boundary increase area

**Coordinates:** See continuation sheet 21

**Verbal Boundary Description:** See continuation sheet 21

**Boundary Justification:** See continuation sheet 21

### 11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Susan Allen Kline, Consultant for Fran McCarthy  
Organization: Ennis School Central City Properties  
Street & number: 1208 W. Magnolia, Suite 212  
City or Town: Fort Worth State: Texas Zip Code: 76104  
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Telephone: 817-921-0127(consultant)  
Date: July 27, 2018

### Additional Documentation

**Maps** (see continuation sheets 22-27)

**Additional items** (see continuation sheets 28-33)

**Photographs** (see continuation sheet 34-40)

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**Photographs**

Ennis Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase)  
Ennis, Ellis County, Texas  
Photographed by Susan Allen Kline, January 5, 2018 (except as noted)

Photo 1  
Description: Resource #84, Ennis Post Office, 205 N. McKinney St, October 4, 2015  
Camera facing SW

Photo 2  
Description: Resources #84 and #85, Ennis Post Office and Postal Box Station (left side of photo), 205 N. McKinney St.  
Camera facing NW

Photo 3  
Description: Resource #86, Citizens National Bank Building (Bank of America), 301 W. Knox St (left) and addition (right)  
Camera facing SE

Photo 4  
Description: Resource #86, Citizens National Bank Building (Bank of America), east elevation, 301 W. Knox St.  
Camera facing SW

Photo 5  
Description: Resource #86, Citizens National Bank Building (Bank of America) addition, 303 W. Knox St.  
Camera facing SE

Photo 6  
Description: Resource #88, Texas Fire Insurance/Ennis Business Forms Building, 107 N. Sherman St.  
Camera facing NW

Photo 7  
Description: Resource #88, Texas Fire Insurance/Ennis Business Forms Building, 107 N. Sherman St.  
Camera facing SE

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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## Description

The purpose of this nomination amendment for the Ennis Commercial Historic District is to increase the boundaries of the district to include the Ennis Post Office (1915) 205 N. McKinney St., the Citizens National Bank Building (1966) 301-303 W. Knox St., and the Ennis Business Forms Building (c. 1950), 107 N. Sherman St. Also included is one small noncontributing building and one small noncontributing structure. All of these resources are adjacent to the west boundary of the original district which was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. In 2016, a nomination amendment was approved that extended the period of significance to 1966 and re-evaluated the contributing and noncontributing status of the resources within the district. In 2018, the National Park Service approved a Part 1 of the federal tax credit application for 107 N. Sherman Street on the condition that the boundaries of the Ennis Commercial Historic District be amended to include the building because it was not individually eligible for listing in the NRHP.

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The Ennis Commercial Historic District was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1986. It was listed under Criterion A (Commerce) and Criterion C (Architecture) for its collection of late 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> century buildings that illustrated Ennis' development as a regional cotton center and a division headquarters for the Houston and Texas Central Railroad. The original plat of Ennis was laid out in a traditional grid pattern oriented toward the railroad tracks. The historic district consisted of seven blocks as well as the railroad right-of-way between Baylor Street on the north, Northeast Main Street on the east, Ennis Avenue on the south and Northwest Main Street on the west. In 2016, an amendment to the nomination was approved. The boundaries of the district remained the same, but the period of significance was extended to 1966. A re-survey of the district identified 59 contributing buildings and 23 noncontributing buildings and one noncontributing site (see Map 3). The amendment's historic context examined post-World War II commercial and architectural trends within the district as merchants and building owners faced new competition from retail development on the fringes of the community and sought to keep the central business district as the city's viable commercial core.

In 2018, a Part 1 application for the federal historic tax credits was submitted to the National Park Service (NPS) for 107 N. Sherman St. The three-story building was constructed c. 1950 as offices for an insurance company and in 1960 became home to Ennis Business Forms, one of the city's largest employers. The building's design reflected Modern Movement influences with minimalist ornamentation. Ribbons of metal windows on the second and third floors gave it a horizontal emphasis while cast stone pilasters added a vertical element. The NPS rendered the opinion that the building was not individually eligible for the National Register. Because of its proximity to the west side of the Ennis Commercial Historic District, the NPS expressed the opinion that it could be considered a contributing resource to the district if the district's boundaries were expanded. The area to be included within the amended boundaries was selected in consultation with the Texas Historical Commission and the NPS. To capture 107 N. Sherman St. within the amended boundaries, it was necessary to include a block that separated the building from the original district. That block contains a former bank building (301-303 W. Knox St.) that was constructed in 1966 with an addition constructed between 1977 and 1992. The 1966 portion of the building was built within the amended period of significance. Also, on the block is one noncontributing ATM building. A decision was also made to include the 1915 Ennis Post Office at 205 N. McKinney St. The Texas Historical Commission considers this significant building to be individually eligible for the National Register. It is unclear why it was omitted from the original boundaries of the district, but it may have been left out to eliminate the inclusion of a partial block. On the parcel containing the post office is one small noncontributing structure.

To summarize, the inclusion of the three contributing buildings within the amended boundaries adds one full block and two partial blocks. The full block is Block 107 Original Town of Ennis, Texas. It contains one contributing building (301-303 W. Knox Street) and one small noncontributing building. The two partial blocks are Block 108 Original Town of Ennis, Lots 1-10 (Ennis Post Office, 205 N. McKinney St.) containing one contributing building and one noncontributing structure [only a portion of the full legal parcel is included to excluded most of the rear parking lot]; and Block 155

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Original Town of Ennis, Lot PT 18 and Lots 19-20 (Ennis Business Form, 107 N. Sherman St.) containing one contributing building.

The three contributing buildings and two noncontributing resources are described in more detail below. The 2016 amendment to the Ennis Commercial Historic District numbered the resources from 1-83 (see Map 3). The numbering of the resources within the boundary increase begins with 84 and ends with 88 (see Map 2).

Note: The original gridded plat of Ennis is oriented toward the former Houston and Texas Central tracks (now Union Pacific) which has a northwest/southeast alignment, meaning the streets in the Ennis Commercial Historic District are not aligned to the cardinal points. However, for simplifying the description of the resources, directions are given as if they are true north, south, east, and west.

**Resource # 84: Ennis Post Office, 205 N. McKinney St, 1915, 1965 (Photos 1 and 2)**

The Ennis Post Office, designed by the Supervising Architect of the Treasury Oscar Wenderoth and constructed in 1915 by Volney E. Taylor, is located at the northwest corner of North McKinney and West Knox streets. The two-story Beaux Arts style building has a rectangular shape. Its exterior is constructed of beige brick with terra cotta and granite ornamentation. The first floor sits above grade on a stone foundation wall at the base of which are small multi-light basement windows. Its symmetrical façade faces east toward McKinney Street and is organized around a centered entrance flanked by two large multiple-light wood windows on either side, all of which are surmounted by fanlight windows. Keystones punctuate the round arches that surround the windows and the entrance. Framing the windows and entrance are boxed granite pilasters. Set between the pilasters at the second story level are decorative terra cotta tablets. The pilasters carry an entablature on which the words "United States Post Office" are written. On either end of the façade are rectangular multiple-light windows. Below the flat roof's parapet are terra cotta cornices that wrap around to the other elevations. Other decorative details include a continuous stone sill below the first-floor windows that wraps around to the north and south elevations. The first-floor windows have stone lintels and the second-floor windows have stone sills. Multi-level stairs approach the centered entrance. On either side of the top of the stairs are historic lamp posts.

The north and south elevations lack the round arch windows and pilasters as found on the façade. However, they do continue the use of multiple-light windows, stone sills and lintels, and terra cotta cornices. At the lower east corner of the north façade is the building's granite cornerstone. It reads:

WILLIAM G. MCADOO  
SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY  
OSCAR WENDEROTH  
SUPERVISING ARCHITECT  
1915

A one-story brick addition was constructed on the building's west end in 1965. Its ornamentation consists of a continuous stone sill, stone lintels, and stone coping at the top of the parapet. The west elevation has a projecting loading dock covered by a metal canopy.

In c. 2011, an ADA ramp with steel handrails was installed to the right of the front entrance. At the same time, non-historic paired front doors were replaced with a single storefront entrance door with sidelights and a metal hand rail was added at the top landing of the front entrance steps. A handicapped parking area was created at the east end of the north elevation adjacent to the ADA ramp. In 2014, non-historic fluorescent light fixtures in the lobby were replaced with new pendant fixtures of a contemporary but compatible design.

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Site alterations include the addition of a large parking area that extends west to Sherman Street covering parcels formerly occupied by two houses and associated outbuildings. A portion of the parking lot is excluded from the amended boundaries because it is not historically associated with the building.

The Texas Historical Commission staff rendered an opinion that the Ennis Post Office is individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places at the local level of significance under Criterion A for Community Planning and Development and Politics and Government and under Criterion C for Architecture.<sup>1</sup>

The Ennis Post Office is counted as one contributing building.

**Resource #85 Postal Box Station, after period of significance (Photo 2)**

South of the southwest corner of the Ennis Post Office (near the parking lot and facing Knox Street) is a small gable-roofed structure that contains self-service postal boxes. It is counted as a noncontributing structure because it was not present during the period of significance.

**Resource #86 Citizens National Bank Building, 301-303 W. Knox Street, 1966 with addition (Photos 3-5)**

The Citizens National Bank Building is located at the southwest corner of West Knox and North McKinney streets immediately south of the Ennis Post Office. The symmetry and simplicity of the north and east elevations, along with their elegant arches, capably express the New Formalism style which became popular in the 1950s and 1960s. The one-story structure was designed by Preston M. Geren and built by general contractor James T. Taylor and Son, Inc., both from Fort Worth, Texas. Its exterior walls are sheathed with tan brick. Decorative details are kept to a minimum. Exposed aggregate cast stone is formed into three flattened arches on the building's north side with a single arch on the east elevation. Panels of smoked glass set within a metal grid fill the arches and are the only windows on these elevations. Paired storefront doors, also of tinted glass, are set in the center arch on the north elevation as well as in the east arch. The tinted glass was meant to cut down on glare and heat from the outside. The building sits slightly above grade and the entrances are approached by flights of concrete stairs. The parapet wall, which conceals a flat roof, is of cast stone containing white crystal quartz topped by a black band of concrete with obsidian stone. The south elevation, which faces an asphalt parking lot lacks the symmetry and formality of the north and east elevations. It has a centered recessed entrance with a metal slab door. To the right (east) is a projecting bay window entirely filled with glass panels set within a metal-framed grid. To the left (west) of the entrance is a ribbon of elongated windows that nearly extend to the parapet. A boxy E-shaped flat canopy runs through the middle of the windows and over the entrance. A second entrance is located near the west end of this elevation. The west elevation is essentially a blank brick wall.

After 1977 and before 1992, the building received a two-story addition on its west end. The addition is basically a cube constructed of panels of reflected glass also set with a metal grid although the grid is more delicate than that used in the 1966 portion. The addition is connected to the original bank building by a hyphen constructed of the gridded glass panels. The primary entrance is recessed near the west end of the north elevation. The addition contained leasable office space.

Low brick retaining walls with cast stone coping surround the 1966 portion of the building on the north and east elevations. The retaining walls frame the inside edges of the concrete sidewalks that border the street. The addition is framed by planting beds edged by a low brick wall with stone coping similar to the original retaining walls. Trees are planted close to the building's perimeter with numerous trees nearly obscuring the addition.

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<sup>1</sup> Adam Alsobrook, Texas Historical Commission, to Dennis J. Delisse, AIA, MPI Architects, November 21, 2011. Copy of letter on file at the Texas Historical Commission.

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The 1966 building and its addition originally had the address of 303 W. Knox St. They are now legally considered as two buildings and each has a different owner. The 1966 portion of the building has the address of 301 W. Knox St. and the addition has the address of 303 W. Knox St. In consultation with the Texas Historical Commission, this nomination identifies the two portions as one building for purposes of the resource count. The addition is used as the administrative office for the local school district. The 1966 portion is currently vacant.

**Resource #87: ATM Building, prior to 1995 (See Figure 3)**

The ATM Building is located near the northwest corner of West Ennis Avenue and North McKinney Street. The small brick building has a flat roof and its walls are constructed of tan brick similar to the brick used for the 1966 portion of the Citizens National Bank Building. It also has a black band around the parapet like the bank building. It has storefront style doors with full-length sidelights on the east and west elevations. Projecting hoods shelter the entrances. A flush metal door is on the north elevation, and large glass panels are on the south elevation. All glass is tinted. The ATM Building is counted as a noncontributing building because it was not present during the period of significance.

**Resource #88: Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Building, 107 N. Sherman St., c. 1950 (Photos 6-7)**

The Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Building is located on the west side of the 100 Block of North Sherman Street. It is bordered on the north by West Knox Street, on the west by a c. 1910 Bungalow/Craftsman style house and on the south by a paved alley. The brick and concrete Two-part Commercial Block building was constructed in c. 1950. It has a rectangular massing and is three-stories high. It measures 120 feet long and 50 feet deep. It has a symmetrical façade. Originally, the first floor was divided into four storefronts with separate entrances plus a center entrance that accessed the lobby. Two storefronts were on each side of the center entrance (Figures 4 and 6). The storefronts have been removed and bricked in. Two blind arches were added as decorative details to the walls where the furthest north and south storefronts were. The center entrance remains. The second and third floors are notable for continuous expanses of multiple-light metal-framed windows. At the north and south corners of the front (east elevation) are stone pilasters. Stone pilasters also frame the center entrance and the elongated center window openings on the second and third floors. All of the brick walls are painted light beige and the pilasters at the corners of the building are painted a salmon color. The pilasters framing the center entrance and windows are also painted beige although the inside edges are painted salmon.

The south elevation faces the alley. It has four metal-framed windows on the second and third floors. There are no openings on the first floor. A metal fire escape extends down from the roof's parapet to the center right windows. There is a stone pilaster at the right corner. Mechanical and electrical systems are along this elevation. The west elevation has eight metal-framed windows on the second and third floors. There is an entrance at the center of the first floor. The north elevation repeats the pattern of continuous ribbons of metal windows on the second and third floors. It has a stone pilasters at the west and east corners. Originally, the first floor had storefront windows on its east half but the openings have been infilled with brick. A garage bay with metal overhead garage door is located to the right of center. The elevator's headhouse is on the roof.

Interior: Off of the front entrance is a lobby. Red brick comprises the lower portion of the north and south walls. Above the brick walls are windows set in aluminum frames. Within each of these walls is an entrance with transom above. The doors are solid wood. At the southwest corner of the lobby is an elevator. At the northwest corner is an entrance that leads to stairs and rear rooms. Dropped acoustical tiles cover the ceiling. The spaces on either side of the lobby have been divided into several rooms. Perimeter walls and those flanking the lobby are covered with plaster.

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The second floor is divided into numerous rooms. Historically, this floor was described as being open space. The walls have been covered with wood paneling. Dropped acoustical tiles cover the ceiling. Perimeter walls are covered with plaster. The third floor has a double-loaded central corridor providing access to numerous rooms and the elevator. The corridor's ceiling is plastered as are the perimeter walls. There is one large room across most of the east half of the floor. It has a dropped ceiling of acoustical tile.

The building will be rehabilitated with the assistance of federal and state tax credits. Proposed work includes installation of storefronts on the first floor of the east elevation.

**Integrity**

The Ennis Post Office (215 N. McKinney St.), Citizens National Bank Building (301-303 W. Knox St.), and Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Building [EBF] (107 N. Sherman St.) retain historic integrity. The bank and post office buildings are highly intact and retain their architectural integrity. All qualify for listing in the National Register of Historic Places as contributing resources to the Ennis Commercial Historic District. Each retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, and feeling. The proposed rehabilitation of the EBF Building will return the exterior to an appearance appropriate for the district's period of significance and allow it to once again contribute to the vitality of downtown Ennis, Texas. The two noncontributing resources are minor features and do not detract from the district's historic or architectural integrity.

**Properties in boundary increase area**

<b>ID #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Status</b>
84	Ennis Post Office	building	1915, 1965	C
85	Postal box station	structure	< 50 years old	NC
86	Citizens National Bank	building	1966, with addition	C
87	ATM building	building	c. 1990	NC
88	Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms	building	c. 1950	C

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### Statement of Significance

Two commercial buildings, the Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Building and the Citizens National Bank Building, and the Ennis Post Office are being nominated as contributing resources (through a boundary increase) to the existing Ennis Commercial Historic District under the areas of Commerce (Criterion A) and Architecture (Criterion C). Each was integral to the district's importance as the commercial hub of this cotton and railroad center from the mid-1910s to the mid-1960s. They also represent the district's evolving architecture context as demonstrated in the post office's pre-World War I Beaux Arts formality to the post-World War II Modernism of the other two buildings. The period of significance for the Ennis Commercial Historic District is 1883 to 1966 as established in an amended nomination in 2016. The proposed boundary increase includes three contributing buildings constructed during the period of significance as well as two noncontributing resources built after the period of significance.

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Ennis, Texas is in east Ellis County, approximately 35 miles south of Dallas. It was established in 1872 along the Houston and Texas Central Railway tracks. By 1890, the town had a population of 3,000. It was around this time that the railroad company chose Ennis to be its northern division headquarters. In addition to benefiting from the railroad, Ennis also served as a regional agricultural center fueled by the production of cotton. By 1930, the city's population had increased to 7,069 and it had 205 businesses.<sup>2</sup> By 1960, the population had grown substantially to 9,347 and was estimated to be 10,335 in 1962. The 1964-1965 *Texas Almanac* noted that Ellis County was becoming increasingly industrialized at the same time that many of its residents were commuting to Dallas and Fort Worth for employment.<sup>3</sup> Today, Ennis has approximately 18,500 residents.

### Ennis Post Office

Ennis' first post office was established on October 2, 1872. It was located in Dixon's Dry Goods Store on North Main Street along the east side of the Houston and Texas Central railroad tracks. The store's proprietor, John M. Dixon, served as the town's first postmaster and retained that position until 1882. Abram Morrison was the postmaster from 1897 to 1910. By the early 1900s, the post office was located in the 200 block of West Knox Street. From 1910 to 1914, the position of postmaster was held by A. H. Culver.<sup>4</sup>

Congress appropriated \$5,000 for the commencement of work on a new post office for Ennis through the Sundry Civil Act of August 1, 1914.<sup>5</sup> Near the end of that year, Oscar Wenderoth, Supervising Architect for the Treasury Department, sought bids for the construction of the building and an additional appropriation of \$43,000 for its completion was made through the Sundry Civil Act of March 3, 1915.<sup>6</sup> Shortly after the appropriation, the contract for its construction was

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<sup>2</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, Lisa C. Maxwell, "Ennis, TX," accessed February 27, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hje11>.

<sup>3</sup> *Texas Almanac* for the years 1945-1946 (p. 413), 1954-1955 (p. 547), and 1964-65 (p. 216). Information accessed September 30, 2015, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <http://texashistory.unt.edu>; crediting Texas State Historical Association, Denton, Texas.

<sup>4</sup> Walter G. Smith, *An Encyclopedia of Texas Post Offices: Texas Post Offices Under Five Flags* (Chicago: The Collectors' Club of Chicago, 1993), p. 89; Laurie J. Wilson, Peggy Holland Rankin, Ellis County Heritage Society, and Ennis Heritage Society, *Ennis*, (Charleston, South Carolina: Arcadia Publishing, 2009), p. 44.

<sup>5</sup> U. S. Treasury Department. Division of Bookkeeping and Warrants. Digest of Appropriations for the Support of the United States for the Service of the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1915 and on Account of Deficiencies for Prior Years Made by the First and Second Sessions of the Sixty-third Congress, 1915. Washington, Government Printing Office, Treasury Department Document No. 2722, Office of the Secretary, Division of Bookkeeping and Warrants, p. 128.

<sup>6</sup> *Engineering News* 79 (No. 26, December 24, 1914): 382; U. S. Treasury Department. Division of Bookkeeping and Warrants. Digest of Appropriations for the Support of the United States for the Service of the Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 1916 and on Account of

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awarded to Volney E. Taylor, a contractor from Huntington, West Virginia. The plans for the two-story building included a basement, a ground area of 4,000 square feet, and a composition roof. It was considered partially fireproof. The exterior was to be faced with brick, stone, and terra cotta.<sup>7</sup> Taylor's bid of \$52,275 specified the use of "light-colored granite other than local granite for all exterior stonework." Interior features included marble floors and denticulated crown molding.<sup>8</sup> The building was constructed at 205 N. McKinney St. on the west edge of the central business district.

In 1928, the building was expanded with the addition of a work room/processing center. In 1959, air conditioning was installed. Further expansion and modernization occurred in 1965. Other renovations occurred in c. 2011 and c. 2014 that included the addition of ADA amenities and contemporary but compatible pendant lights to replace non-historic fluorescent fixtures. Postal services have been conducted at this location for more than one hundred years.

*Design of Federal Buildings in the Late-19<sup>th</sup> and Early-20<sup>th</sup> Centuries*

Federal buildings designed between the 1850s and the 1890s tended to reflect the preferred styles of whoever was serving as the Treasury Department's Supervising Architect. During the tenure of Supervising Architect James Knox Taylor (1897-1912), Federal buildings tended to be "monumental and beautiful" with the goal of "represent[ing] the ideals of democracy and high standards of architectural sophistication in their communities." Taylor's style preferences were "derived from classical or early American traditions" and built to last using high quality materials. Although private architects were often used on larger projects, the Office of the Supervising Architect designed most smaller buildings, including post offices. Buildings were individually designed as Taylor resisted the idea of standardization.<sup>9</sup>

As questions over the expense of construction and the need for Federal buildings grew, Federal policy changed. The 1913 Public Building Act, which authorized the construction of numerous public buildings, prohibited the construction of new post offices in communities with postal receipts of less than \$10,000 annually. The act created a "classification system under which a post office's structural and ornamental qualities were functions of the value of real estate and postal receipts in the city where it was to be located." Large cities still received monumental post offices but the Supervising Architect's Office used standardized designs and floor plans when possible, especially for "heating, ventilating, sanitary work, and the production of specifications," and rarely employed private architects through the 1920s. However, standardization did not mean that the exterior of buildings was identical.<sup>10</sup>

Oscar Wenderoth was the Supervising Architect for the Department of the Treasury when the Ennis Post Office was constructed in 1915 and it is his name that appears on the building's cornerstone along with William McAdoo, Secretary of the Treasury. The building's contractor, Volney E. Taylor, also constructed the post office in Marlin, and possibly the ones in Weatherford and Hillsboro, Texas around this same time.<sup>11</sup>

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Deficiencies for Prior Years Made by the Third Session of the Sixty-third Congress, 1916. Washington, Government Printing Office, Treasury Department Document No. 2738, Office of the Secretary, Division of Bookkeeping and Warrants, p. 97.

<sup>7</sup> "Change of Assignment of Superintendents," *Journal Society of Constructors of Federal Buildings*, VI (No. 3, March 1915): 170-171. Digitized by Google.

<sup>8</sup> *Engineering and Contracting*, 43 (No. 8, February 24, 1915): 36. Digitized by Google.

<sup>9</sup> Beth M. Boland, *National Register Bulletin 13: How to Apply the National Register Criteria to Post Offices*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Interagency Resources Division, National Register of Historic Places, 1984, revised 1994, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid; Antoinette J. Lee, *Architects to the Nation: The Rise and Decline of the Supervising Architect's Office* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 219.

<sup>11</sup> "Federal Building at Marlin," *Dallas Morning News*, August 7, 1915 and "Change of Assignment of Superintendents," *Journal Society of Constructors of Federal Buildings*, 6 (No. 3, March 1915): 170.

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The building has been altered over the years with major alterations occurring within the period of significance. In 1928, expansion work provided work room/processing areas. Central air conditioning was installed in 1959. The building was significantly expanded and modernized in 1965 with an addition to the rear. The brick addition was complementary to the building's original design. An ADA ramp was added to the front of the building c. 2011. The building is an excellent example of federal architecture from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, an outstanding local example of the Beaux Arts style, and provides an important symbol of the Federal presence in Ennis. Functions within the building assisted the commercial development of the city.

### **Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Building**

On June 6, 1949, the *Dallas Morning News* published a short article announcing that the Cosmopolitan Life Insurance Company and the Trinity Life Insurance Company planned to construct a three-story brick building in Ennis, Texas. The site for the building was one-half block north of West Ennis Avenue, the major east/west street through the central business district, and on the western-edge of downtown on a site formerly occupied by a residence. The article stated that the structure was to be of modern design with air conditioning and an elevator. Construction was to begin on January 1, 1950.<sup>12</sup>

A photograph of the completed building appeared in an advertisement for the Texas Fire Insurance Company in the 1953 edition of *The Cicerone*, the Ennis High School yearbook (Figure 4). It showed a three-story brick building with full-height stone pilasters at the corners of the symmetrical façade. Long ribbons on metal windows ran across the second and third floor. The building's center bay contained the main entrance on the first floor. Directly above it on the second and third floors were large window openings. The entrance and large windows were framed by full-height stone pilasters. On either side of the entrance bay were two storefronts, each with its own entrance, thereby making it possible for the building to be occupied by more than one tenant. The horizontal emphasis of the metal ribbon windows and the vertical emphasis of the stone pilasters gave the building a modern appearance.<sup>13</sup>

Around the time that the photograph of the building appeared in the yearbook, the Texas Fire Insurance Company was among three insurance companies being sued by Texas Attorney General John Ben Shepperd for false and fraudulent affidavits used to obtain their charters.<sup>14</sup> As part of the fallout from the criminal charges, the building was placed in receivership by the 53<sup>rd</sup> Judicial District Court of Travis County. On October 11, 1953, an advertisement for its sale appeared in the *Dallas Morning News*. The ad described it as being air conditioned, centrally heated, and that it had automatic elevators. Its "[ground] floor affords excellent business rental space; 2<sup>nd</sup> floor open space; 3<sup>rd</sup> floor divided into single, 2 and 3-room offices, suites and conference room." It stated that the building was easily adaptable to almost any use and was designed to provide maximum natural light for daytime use and fluorescent lighting made it possible for night-time operation. It had the added benefit of a foundation that could support additional floors.<sup>15</sup>

The building did not sell and over the next six years, it had a variety of tenants and was often referred to as the Texas Fire Building despite any negative association with the name. Occupants included the local draft registration board, Slayton Real Estate Agency, a warehouse for Allen Furniture, and the Ennis Chamber of Commerce. Community and special

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<sup>12</sup> "3-Story Building Planned at Ennis," *Dallas Morning News*, June 6, 1949 and Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Ennis, Texas, January 1927 updated in April 1960.

<sup>13</sup> Advertisement for Texas Fire Insurance Company, *The Cicerone*, 1953 (n.p.)

<sup>14</sup> "Three Firms Face Restraining Orders," *The Orange Leader* (Orange, Texas), March 22, 1953

(<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapath588999/m1/6/>; accessed January 18, 2018), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, [texashistory.unt.edu](http://texashistory.unt.edu).

<sup>15</sup> "Notice to the Creditors of Texas Fire Insurance Company, Ennis, Texas," *Ennis Daily News*, November 9, 1953; "Biggest Business Property Value of the Year," advertisement in the *Dallas Morning News*, October 11, 1953.

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interest groups such as the Ennis Future Nurses Club, a mental health workshop under the direction of the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, and Boy Scouts also used the building for meetings.<sup>16</sup> In February 1959, the building was sold to two businessmen from Corsicana through sealed bids to the liquidator for the State Board of Insurance.<sup>17</sup>

In 1960, the building was acquired by Ennis Business Forms (EBF) for its headquarters. The company renovated the interior by rearranging partitions and creating meeting rooms. Also added was the firm's name written in large block letters along the parapet. This made it a visual landmark and signified EBF's confidence in its stature as an important player in Ennis' economy (see Figure 6).<sup>18</sup>

EBF was founded in 1909 as Ennis Tag & Salesbook Company with approximately six employees operating in a few hundred square feet of space. It began as an offshoot of the printing shop that published the weekly *Ennis News*. The shop began making small shipping tags which cotton growers could attach to their bales of cotton. The product was so popular among area cotton growers that company salesmen were soon peddling them wherever cotton was grown. This resulted in the business breaking away from the newspaper and the formation of a separate company. Tags were made for a variety of products. Once the company began the production of sales books, this soon led to the manufacture of school and office supplies. In 1940, the American Carbon Paper Manufacturing Company was spun out as a separate entity. Both businesses occupied a five-acre site east of the Houston and Texas Central railroad tracks. Warehouses were established in Birmingham, Alabama; Houston, New Orleans, and Albuquerque, New Mexico. By 1949, Ennis Tag employed more than 300 people, making it the second largest employer in Ennis with the Southern Pacific, the successor to the Houston and Texas Central, being the largest employer. Ennis Tag established plants in Chatham, Virginia and Paso Robles, California but chose to keep its headquarters in Ennis. By 1953, its Ennis plant was the largest tag manufacturing plant in the world. During the 1950s, its sales grew nearly \$1,000,000 each year and in 1960, sales reached \$11,800,000. In 1959, the company's stock went public and the name was changed to Ennis Business Forms. In 1961, it had 550 employees at its Ennis facilities. For many years, it designed and built its own printing machinery.<sup>19</sup>

The company's products had a national reach and through the 1960s, the firm expanded with the acquisition of other companies across the country. The growth of the computer and data processing industry and the demand for business forms were closely related to the company's expansion through the 1960s. For its 1965 fiscal year, the company's net product sales were \$16,384,000, an increase of 11% over the previous year. For the 1969 fiscal year, the company reported an increase of approximately 18% in sales and a 9% increase in net income.<sup>20</sup>

Ennis Business Forms headquarters stayed at 107 N. Sherman St. until c. 1998 when the company announced it was moving to DeSoto, a suburb of Dallas in southern Dallas County.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> "Draft Registering Recommendation Made by Board," *Ennis Daily News*, November 1, 1954; Advertisement for Slayton Real Estate Agency, *Ennis Daily News*, June 15, 1957; Advertisement for Allen Furniture Company, *Ennis Daily News*, September 15, 1957; "Ennis Chamber Sets June Move," *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, May 21, 1960; "Eileen Thompson Elected President of New Ennis Future Nurses Clubs," *Ennis Daily News*, February 16, 1956; "Workshops Set on Mental Health," *Dallas Morning News*, October 22, 1956. Issues of *Ennis Daily News* accessed through University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, [texashistory.unt.edu](http://texashistory.unt.edu) at various times between January 18, 2018 and July 2, 2018.

<sup>17</sup> "Texas Fire Building Sold to Corsicanans," *Ennis Daily News*, February 14, 1959; "Ennis Chamber Sets June Move."

<sup>18</sup> "Ennis Business Forms Gen'l Offices Expansion Readied," *Ennis Daily News*, February 16, 1960; Advertisement for Ennis Business Forms in *The Cicerone*, 1965 (n.p.).

<sup>19</sup> "Ennis Enterprise Grows: Tag and Salesbook Company to Cut 40<sup>th</sup> Birthday Cake," *Dallas Morning News*, November 6, 1949; "Ennis Picks New Name," *Dallas Morning News*, August 24, 1959; Rudy Rochelle, "Paperwork Revolution Booms for Ennis Company," *Dallas Morning News*, March 12, 1961.

<sup>20</sup> Ledgerwood Sloan, "Ennis Business Forms Growth Seen Unabated," *Dallas Morning News*, March 31, 1965; "Ennis Forms Boosts Net," *Dallas Morning News*, March 29, 1969.

<sup>21</sup> "Ennis Business Forms moving base to DeSoto," *Dallas Morning News*, September 22, 1998.

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### Citizens National Bank

Citizens National Bank of Ennis opened in 1904 in a building at the southwest corner of Main and Knox Streets.<sup>22</sup> It later moved to a location on West Ennis Avenue. In 1966, the bank moved to a new structure built specifically for it. The new building was located south of the post office at the southwest corner of Knox Avenue and North McKinney Street on a site once occupied by Tabernacle Baptist Church. It was designed in the New Formalist style by the firm of Preston M. Geren, architects and engineers, and built by James T. Taylor and Son, Inc., both of Fort Worth.<sup>23</sup>

The building was constructed during the tenure of bank president Cecil Hufford Tolleson who succeeded his father, J. W. Tolleson, in the position. As it neared completion, the *Ennis Daily News* described it as “handsome” and “outstandingly attractive.” Going into more detail, the newspaper stated that its contemporary design “adds an attractive scene to the downtown picture. Total area of the building is 15,000 square feet—a building that contains 1,595 tons of concrete, 66 tons of structural steel and 44 tons of reinforcing steel. For complete comfort, the bank has 45 tons of air conditioning.” The exterior walls were of tan-colored brick. Exposed aggregate cast stone was formed into three arches at the main entrance on the building’s north side. A single arch marked the entrance at the McKinney Street elevation on the building’s east side. The parapet wall was described as cast stone containing white crystal quartz topped by a black band of concrete with obsidian stone. Windows were of “gray solar glass to cut down on the glare and heat inside.”<sup>24</sup>

The façade’s arches were carried through the interior to give a vaulted effect to the ceiling. The newspaper reported “Interior colors were chosen to harmonize with the drapery fabric that was selected—the basic color being a natural linen.” Woven within the fabric was a pattern of blues, greens, and golds that complimented colors in the carpet and upholstery. North of the east entrance was the president’s office. The safety deposit box department, vault, bank tellers’ area, and a work room were on the south side. The tellers worked at a flat counter with no cages. A community room was in the southwest corner. A kitchenette and restrooms were available to the public and bank employees. The employees also had access to a snack bar.<sup>25</sup>

The New Formalism style emerged in the 1950s and was popular throughout the remainder of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Character-defining features include symmetrical arrangements with a classical feel (Neo-neo-classism). The use of quality materials such as marble or other finished stone gave buildings designed in this style a simple refinement. As Frederick Koeper noted in *American Architecture, Volume 2: 1860-1976*

Clients readily accepted the superficial elegance of the New Formalism as an artistic achievement and a worthy symbol of their culture, government, or business enterprise. Some architects were quick to flatter themselves that they had restored long-exiled beauty to architecture. In fact the New Formalism lacked vigor and had little real importance; it was a minor episode in the reaction against the programmed severities of the International Style.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *Ellis County Mirror*, October 13, 1904 as transcribed in *Daughters of the American Revolution*, Rebecca Boyce Chapter (Waxahachie, Texas), Genealogical Records Committee, Texas Genealogical Records, Ellis County, Volume 18, Page 117, book [1963], Waxahachie, Texas. (texashistory.unt/ark:/67531/metaph105043/ml/124/?q=%22Citizens%20National%20Bank%22%20Ennis: accessed June 21, 2018, University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, texashistory.unt.edu; crediting Nicholas P. Sims Library.

<sup>23</sup> “Grand Opening Thurs. Of Citizens Nat’l Bank,” *Ennis Daily News*, December 28, 1966; “Citizens Nat’l Bank Moving Into Its Handsome New Bldg.,” *Ennis Daily News*, December 17, 1966.

<sup>24</sup> “Ennis Bank’s President Dies at 55,” *Dallas Morning News*, August 27, 1967; “Citizens Nat’l Bank Moving Into Its Handsome New Bldg.”

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>26</sup> Frederick Koeper, *American Architecture, Volume 2: 1860-1976* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, fifth printing 1992), p. 384.

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Practitioners of the style included Edward Durell Stone (1902-1978) and Philip Johnson (1906-2005). Preston M. Geren's Citizens National Bank in Ennis shares features found on Johnson's Amon Carter Museum in Fort Worth, Geren's hometown, completed in 1961. Both have façade arches of sculpted stone—shell-limestone for the museum and exposed aggregate for the bank. The bank primary composition is even more similar to Johnson's 1961 Sheldon Art Museum at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, which also features a three-bay centrally-placed arched entrance on an otherwise windowless façade.<sup>27</sup>

Although Koeper may have dismissed New Formalism as having “little real importance,” the design of Ennis' Citizens National Bank Building was a definite departure from the late 19<sup>th</sup>- and early 20<sup>th</sup>-century One- and Two-Part Commercial Blocks that dominated the architectural vocabulary of the buildings in the Ennis Commercial Historic District. That a bank in a small town in North Central Texas should embrace a modern design for its new building was not a novel idea. Many banks built after World War II in large cities and small towns featured designs that experimented with new forms and building materials and that accommodated patrons' desires for convenience, friendliness, and “efficiency and economy.” The design of Ennis' Citizens National Bank did not embrace the futuristic expressiveness of many contemporary banks but the use of cast stone arches, white crystal quartz, and black obsidian stone introduced new materials while its symmetrical formality presented a familiar appearance.<sup>28</sup>

In 1972, Citizens National Bank merged with First Bancorp, a multi-bank holding company based in Corsicana, Texas. It continued to operate under the Citizens National Bank name. In 1981, First Bancorp was acquired by First International Bancshares of Dallas. At the time of the acquisition, First International Bancshares was reported to be the largest banking organization in the South and Southwest. The name of the Ennis bank was later changed to Bank of America.<sup>29</sup>

In 1977, Citizens National Bank opened a motor bank to the west of the 1966 building with access off of North Sherman Street. Between that date and 1992, a two-story addition sheathed in reflective glass was constructed on the site of the motor bank. It was connected to the original building by a hyphen constructed of the same reflective glass. The addition included leasable office space. The Ennis Independent School District administrative offices have occupied this space for several decades. Bank of America ceased operating in the 1966 portion of the building in late 2017. Each portion has separate owners.<sup>30</sup>

### Architects and Builders

The designer and contractor for the Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Building have not been identified. Oscar Wenderoth and Volney E. Taylor were the architect and contractor, respectively, for the Ennis Post Office. The architect and contractor for Citizens National Bank were Preston M. Geren and James T. Taylor and Son, Inc., respectively. More information about these individuals and firms follows.

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<sup>27</sup> Koeper, *American Architecture, Volume 2: 1860-1976*, p. 39.

<sup>28</sup> For a discussion of post-World War II banking trends and designs, see Carol J. Dyson and Anthony Rubano, “Banking on the Future: Modernism and the Local Bank,” in *Preserving the Recent Past 2*, edited by Deborah Slaton and William G. Foulks, (Washington, D.C.: Historic Preservation Education Foundation, Association for Preservation Technology, and National Park Service, 2000), pp. 2-43-2-55.

<sup>29</sup> “Citizens Nat'l Bank Merger Agreement to Shareholders Oct. 12,” *Ennis Daily News*, September 27, 1972; *The Clifton Record* (Clifton, Texas), Vol. 83, No. 28, Ed. 1 Thursday, July 6, 1978, newspaper, July 6, 1978, (<https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph797618/ml/l:/essed> June 21, 2018), University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, [texashistory.unt.edu](https://texashistory.unt.edu); *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, morning edition, August 4, 1981.

<sup>30</sup> “Cordial Invitation to Ribbon Cutting By C-C Kane Club,” *Ennis Daily News*, July 14, 1977.

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*Oscar Wenderoth, (1871-1938)*

Oscar Wenderoth was born in Philadelphia, the son of portrait painter and photographer Frederick A. Wenderoth and Laura Wenderoth. He attended the Franklin Institute Drawing School and had apprenticeships in the offices of several of Philadelphia's leading architects. He was working in the Office of the Supervising Architect of the U. S. Treasury by 1897 and by 1904 was head draftsman for the Superintendent of the U.S. Capitol. He left in 1909 to work for the well-known New York firm Carrere & Hastings. He returned to Washington, D. C. in 1912 to become Supervising Architect of the Treasury. He remained there until 1915 when he assumed a position with Weary & Alford, a Chicago firm that specialized in the construction of high rise bank buildings. Suffering from vision impairment, Wenderoth was completely blind by 1920. He taught himself typing and how to read Braille. With these skills he was able to find new forms of work but struggled financially. In 1926, friends, architects, and allied tradesmen formed a committee to raise funds for his benefit. He died in Manhattan, New York in 1938.<sup>31</sup>

Oscar Wenderoth was the Supervising Architect for the Department of the Treasury when the Ennis Post Office was constructed in 1915 and it is his name that appears on the building's cornerstone. Other cities in Texas that received post offices during Wenderoth's tenure include Marlin, Marshall (NR 2001), and Weatherford.

*Volney E. Taylor (1861-1958)*

Little information has been found on Volney E. Taylor. He was born in Pennsylvania in 1861 and in 1883, married Lucy Frizell in Ohio. In the early 1900s, he worked as a carpenter in Rarden, Ohio and then in Huntington, West Virginia. By the mid-1910s, he had his own firm that specialized in the construction of federal buildings. By 1926, he was living in Orlando, Florida, still working as a contractor. He died in 1958 and is buried in Gotha, Florida.<sup>32</sup>

In addition to building the post office in Ennis, Taylor's firm also constructed the post office in Marlin, and possibly the ones in Weatherford and Hillsboro, Texas around the same time.

*Preston M. Geren, Sr. (1891-1969)*

Preston Murdoch Geren, Sr. was born on November 2, 1891 in Sherman, Texas. He graduated from Texas A&M College in 1912 with a degree in architectural engineering. Following graduation, he was the supervising architect for buildings on the A&M campus for two years and was then a partner in the firm Giesecke and Geren for two years. After service in World War I, he joined the construction firm of J. F. Johnson in Austin as chief engineer.<sup>33</sup>

Geren was the chief engineer for the Fort Worth firm Sanguinet, Staats, and Hedrick (later Wyatt C. Hedrick, Inc.) from 1923 to 1934. While with this firm he worked on the Fort Worth Club, Texas & Pacific Passenger Terminal, the Fair, and the Electric buildings, all prominent buildings in downtown Fort Worth. He started his own firm in 1934 and in 1949 was joined by his son, Preston M. Geren, Jr. (1923-2013). Prominent structures designed by the firm included Farrington Field

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<sup>31</sup> *Philadelphia Architects and Buildings*, Sandra L. Tatman, "Wenderoth, Oscar (1871-1938)," accessed July 4, 2018, [https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar\\_display.cfm/21542](https://www.philadelphiabuildings.org/pab/app/ar_display.cfm/21542); "Committee for the Relief of Oscar Wenderoth," *Pencil Points* 7 (Number 11, November 1926): 687.

<sup>32</sup> 1900 U.S. Census; Census Place: Rarden, Scioto, OH; Page 3; Enumeration District: 0131, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), 1900 United States Federal Census [database on-line], Provo, UT,: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2004; Volney E. Taylor in the U.S. City Directories, 1822-1995, [www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com), U. S. City Directories 1822-1995 [database on-line], Provo, UT,: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2011; Volney E. Taylor in the U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current, Ancestry.com, U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s to Current [database on-line], Provo, UT,: Ancestry.com Operations Inc., 2012.

<sup>33</sup> *Handbook of Texas Online*, Judith S. Cohen, "Geren, Preston Murdoch, Sr.," accessed May 30, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fge17>.

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and Elmwood Sanitarium, as well as numerous banks, churches, schools, and residences. Geren often collaborated with other architects on large projects. These included Greater Southwest International Airport (with Joseph R. Pelich), McCloskey Army Hospital in Temple, and Harmon Army Hospital in Longview, and numerous airfields and military facilities with Wiley G. Clarkson, Joseph R. Pelich, and Joe Rady. The firm also designed numerous buildings for the University of Texas at Arlington and Austin, Texas Wesleyan College, University of Dallas, Texas Woman's University, and Texas Christian University. Geren was also associate architect on Louis Kahn's internationally known Kimbell Art Museum in Fort Worth but died before it was completed in 1972.<sup>34</sup>

An active participant in professional architecture and engineering organizations, Geren was a charter member of the Texas Society of Architects and the Fort Worth chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The Texas Society of Professional Engineers selected him as Engineer of the Year in 1956 and he was elected a Fellow of the American Society of Civil Engineers in 1959. Geren was twice presented honors by the City of Fort Worth for his civic affairs work. He remained active in his firm until his death on September 21, 1969.<sup>35</sup>

*James T. Taylor and Son, Inc., Contractor*

James T. Taylor (1870-1949) was born in Epsom, England and came to the United States at the age of 16, moving directly to Fort Worth, Texas. He was employed by Walter Bennett of the Acme Brick Company. At the age of 18, he started his own construction firm. His first project was work on the municipal water works. For more than 50 years, his firm constructed many Fort Worth landmarks including the North Side (Stockyards) Coliseum (1908), Will Rogers Memorial Coliseum (1936), old City Hall (1937), and numerous public schools. During World War II, Taylor partnered with other contractors on work at Camp Berkeley, Camp Hood, and Camp Swift. His firm was responsible for the construction of all of the buildings at the Bluebonnet Ordnance Plant at MacGregor, Texas. He worked on numerous housing projects after the war, including the 744-unit Pasadena Gardens in Houston. Taylor died in 1947.<sup>36</sup>

Taylor's son, James Oscar Taylor (1889-1978), operated the company until it was liquidated in 1969. Projects completed by the firm after the elder Taylor's death included Castleberry High School (c. 1951), Acme Brick Company headquarters, (1952), and an addition to All Saints Hospital (1964), all in Fort Worth. The firm constructed Citizens National Bank Building in Ennis two years later. Another project under construction around the same time was a biology building at North Texas State University (now the University of North Texas) in Denton. James Oscar Taylor was active in the Association of General Contractors and in 1974 received the organization's Industry Award.<sup>37</sup>

## Summary

The Ennis Post Office, the former Citizens National Bank Building, and the former Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Buildings are nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as contributing resources to the Ennis Commercial Historic District, thereby adding approximately three acres to the boundaries of the original district. They are being nominated to the National Register at the local level of significance under Criterion A in the area of Commerce. Each of the buildings were constructed for specific needs (post office, bank, and business office) and contributed to the Ennis Commercial Historic District's importance as the central business district of Ennis, Texas. They are also locally significant under Criterion C in Architecture for their ability to convey changing architectural trends from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the mid-1960s. All were constructed within the district's period of significance (1883-1966).

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 12, 1947.

<sup>37</sup> *Fort Worth Star-Telegram*, March 16, 1969, December 16, 1951, October 5, 1952, July 1, 1964, June 2, 1966, and August 4, 1978.

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**Section 10: Boundary Continuation Sheet**

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: N/A

1. 32.328095° -96.629783°
2. 32.327002° -96.629036°
3. 32.326528° -96.629979°
4. 32.326725° -96.630537°
5. 32.327077° -96.630790°
6. 32.327772° -96.630433°

**Verbal Boundary Description:** Beginning at the northwest corner of Lot 10, Block 60 Ennis O.T., proceed in a southwesterly direction across North McKinney Street and along the north boundary line of 205 N. McKinney St. for a distance of approximately 234 feet; proceed in a south/southeasterly direction to the south curb line of West Knox Street; proceed in a southwesterly direction along the south curb line of West Knox Street, across North Sherman Street to the northwest corner of the parcel associated with 107 N. Sherman St.; proceed in a south/southeasterly direction to the southwest corner of the parcel associated with 107 N. Sherman St.; proceed in an east/northeasterly direction along the south boundary of the parcel associated with 107 N. Sherman St. to the east curb line of North Sherman Street; proceed in a south/southeasterly direction to the north curb line of West Ennis Avenue; proceed in a northeasterly direction along the north curb line of West Ennis Avenue to the east curb line of North McKinney Street; proceed in a northwesterly direction along the east curb line of North McKinney Street to the point of beginning.

**Boundary Justification:** The boundaries include approximately three acres consisting of the parcels associated with the nominated resources and portions of the adjacent streets (North McKinney Street, West Knox Street, and North Sherman Street) to make for a contiguous district. Only a portion of the parcel now associated with the Ennis Post Office (205 N. McKinney St.) was included to exclude most of the parking lot behind the building because it is not historically associated with the nominated resource.

Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas



Ellis County, Texas

Map 1. Google Earth (August 28, 2018)



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

Map 2: Google Earth Map (August 24, 2018), with proposed boundary increase, contributing and noncontributing resources, and photo key.

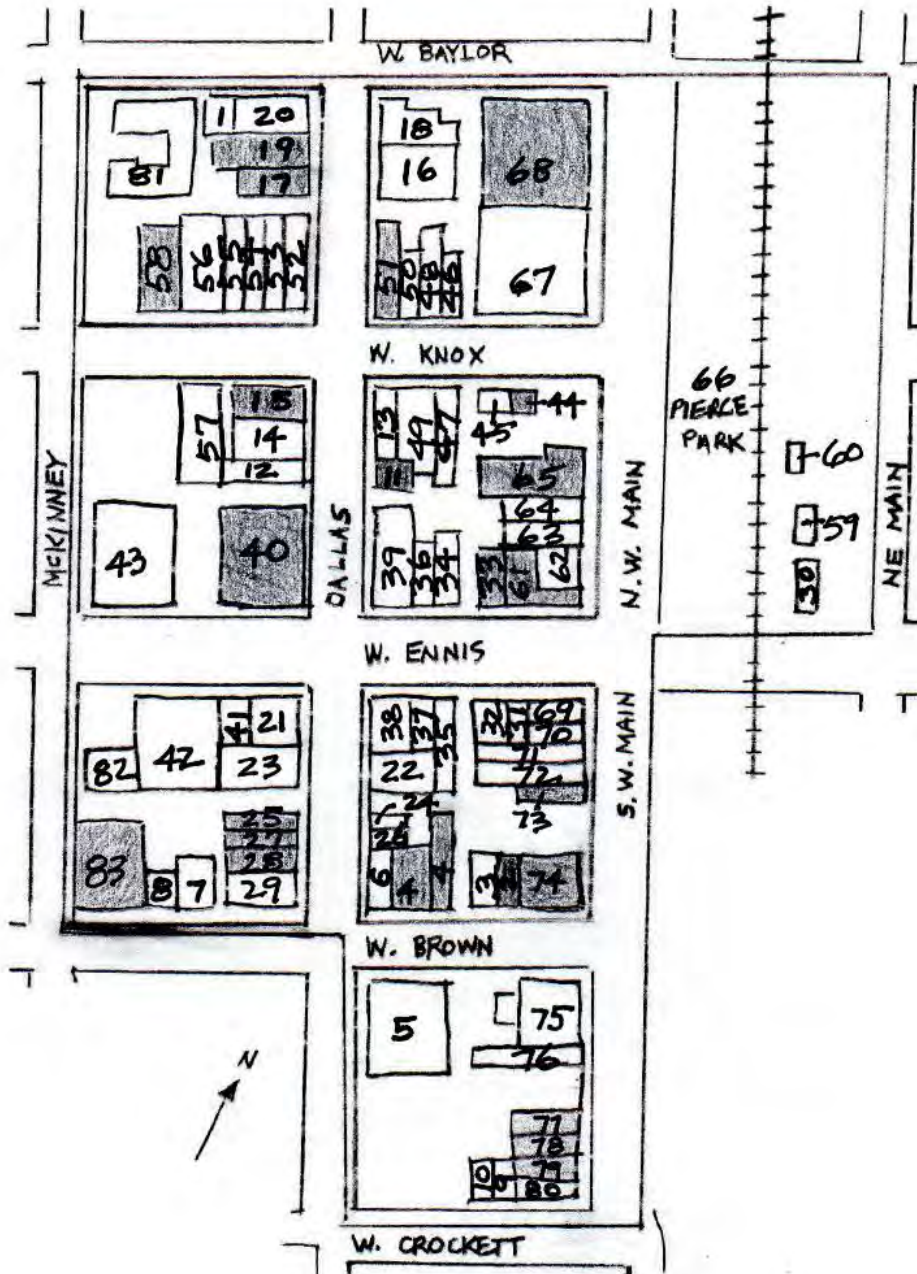


Contributing  Noncontributing

ID #	Name	Type	Date	Status
84	Ennis Post Office	building	1915, 1965	C
85	Postal box station	structure	< 50 years old	NC
86	Citizens National Bank	building	1966, with addition	C
87	ATM building	building	c. 1990	NC
88	Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms	building	c. 1950	C

Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

Map 3: Ennis Commercial Historic District, contributing and noncontributing resources from 2016 National Register of Historic Places nomination amendment.

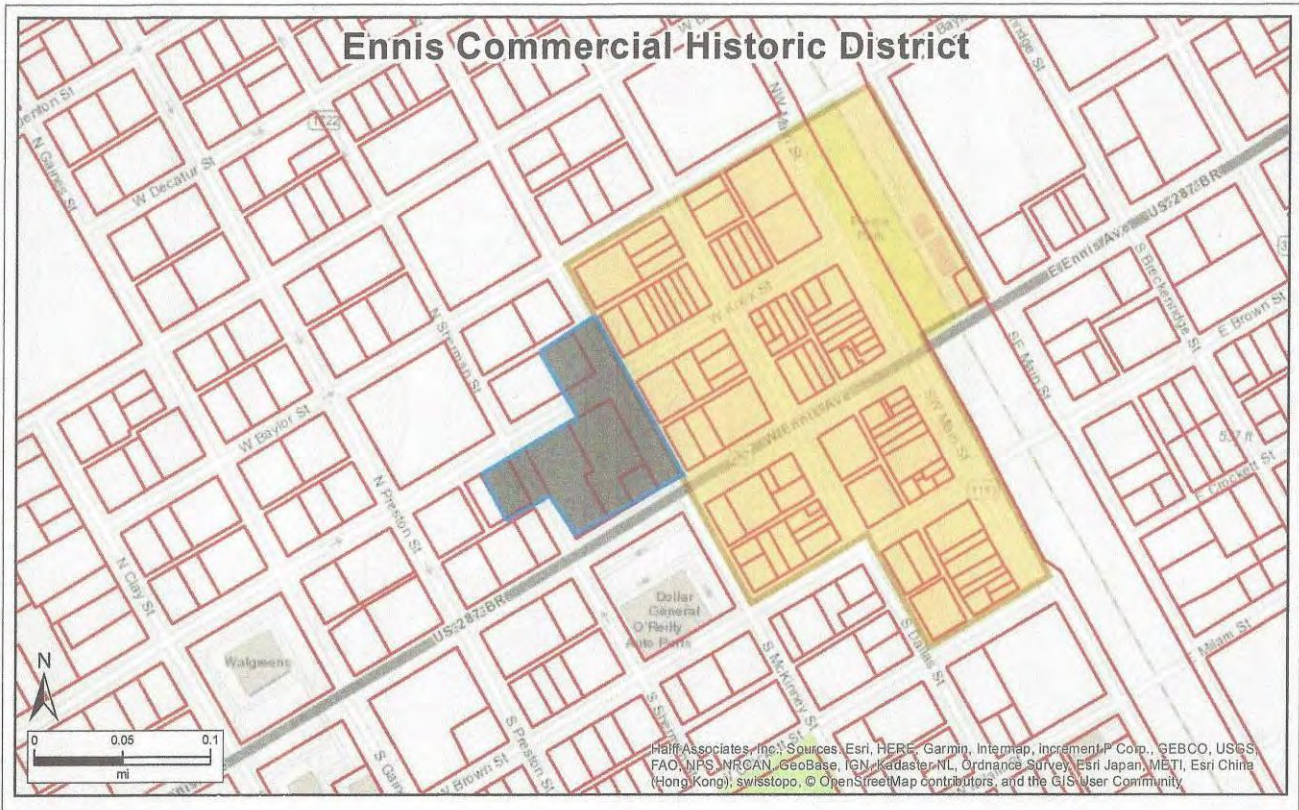


Contributing

Noncontributing

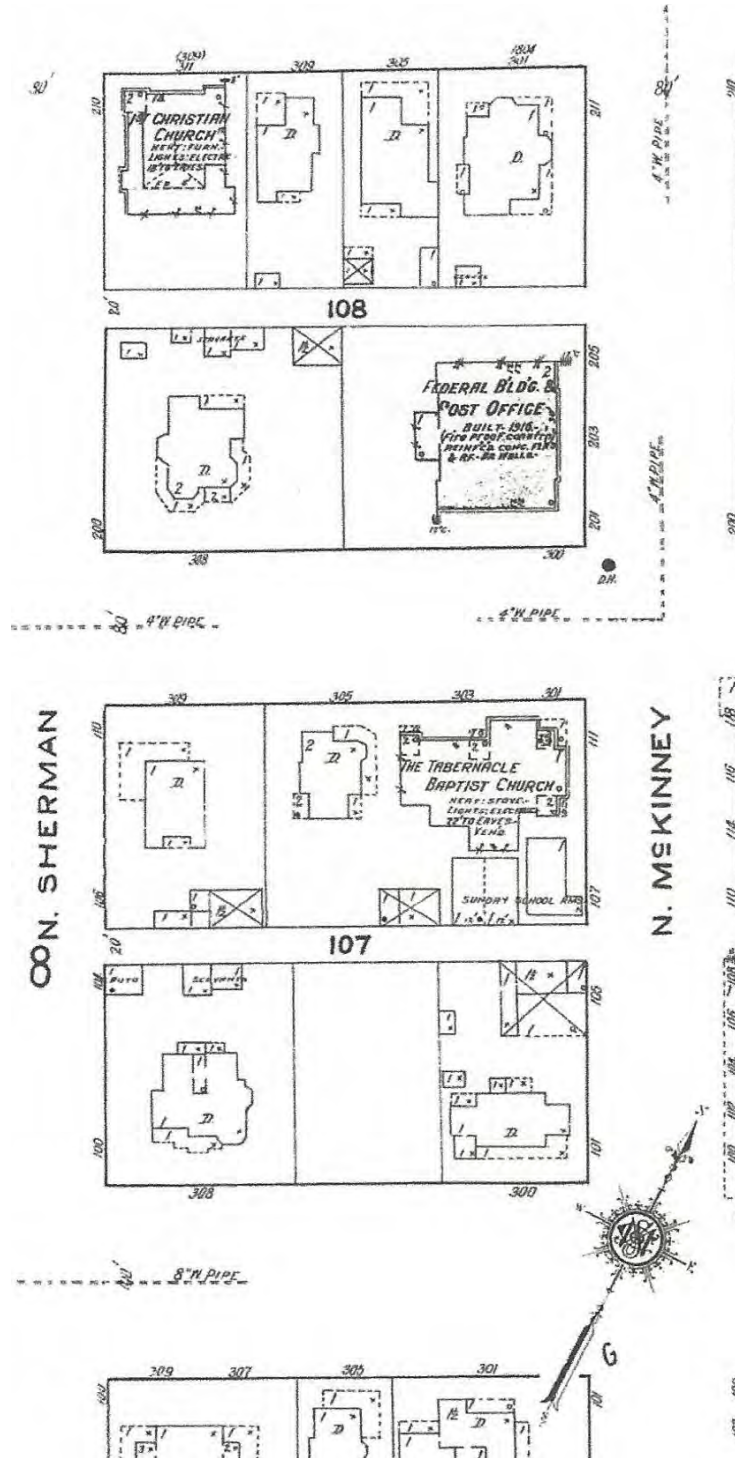
Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

Map 4: Ennis Commercial Historic District with Boundary Increase. Map generated from City of Ennis website, July 16, 2018 (<https://ennis.half.com/portal1/Map.aspx>).



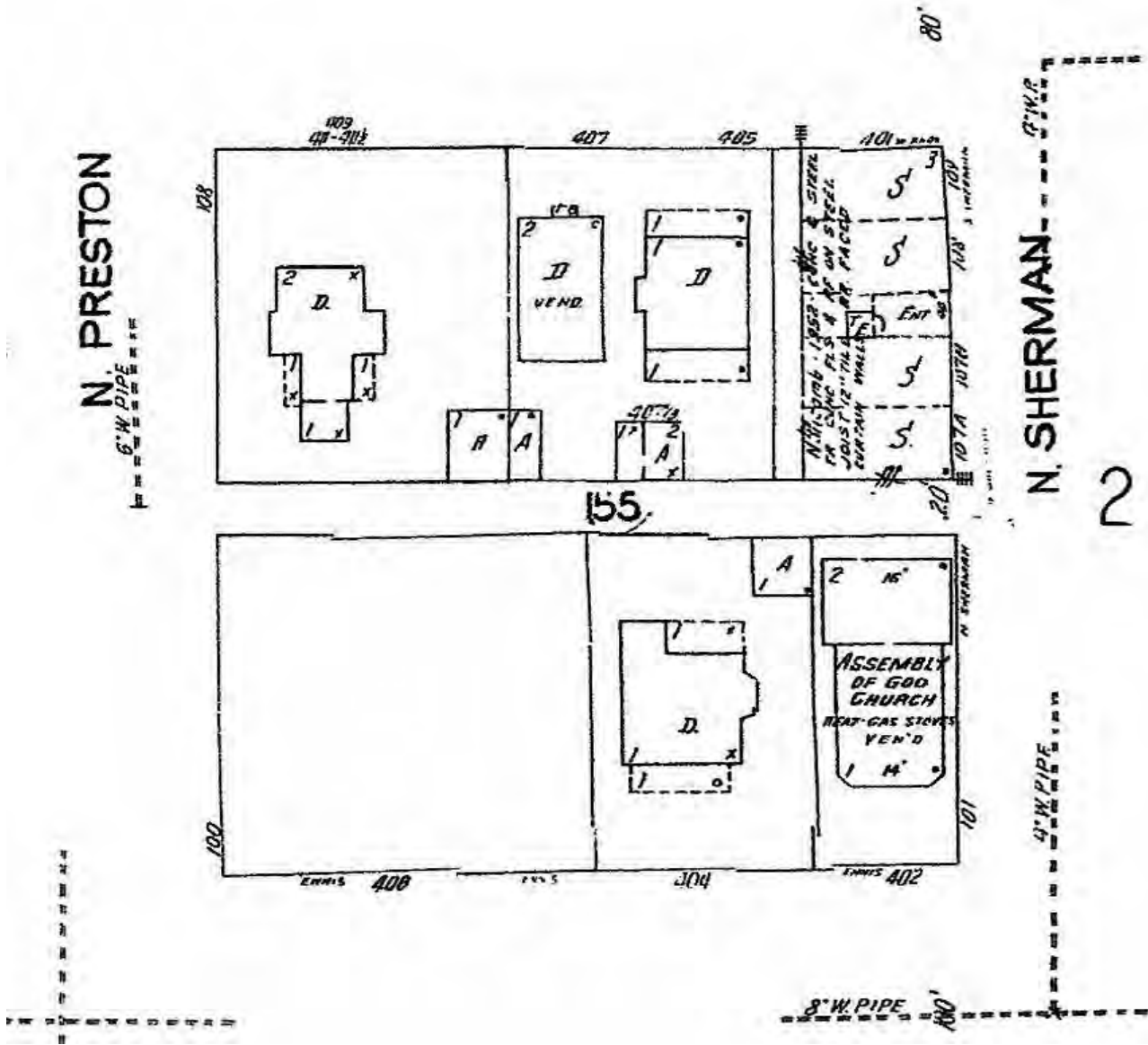
Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

Map 5: April 1920 Sanborn Fire Insurance Company Map, Ennis, Texas, Sheet 2. The Ennis Post Office (Resource #84) is shown in the southeast corner of Block 108. Block 107 is the future site of Citizens National Bank (Resource #86).



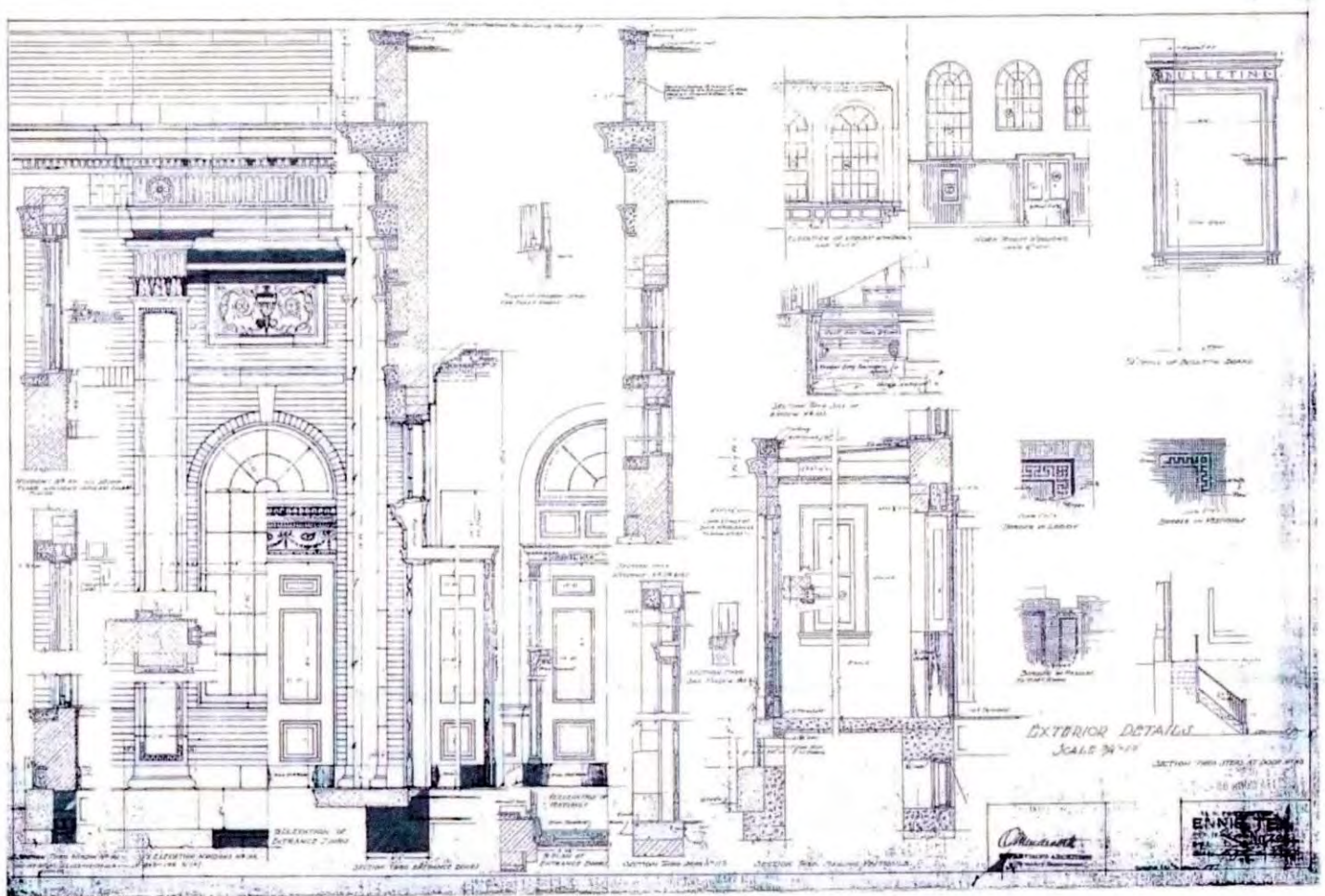
Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

Map 6 : Resource #88, Texas Fire Insurance/Ennis Business Forms Building, 107 N. Sherman St., Ennis, Texas in the northeast corner of Block 155. Sanborn Fire Insurance Map Co., February 1927 update April 1960, Sheet 8. Date of construction given as 1952. N ↗



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas



Figure 1: Resource #84, Ennis Post Office, 205 N. McKinney St. Images of exterior construction details with Oscar Wenderoth's signature. From correspondence relating to the Ennis Post Office, Division of Architecture, Texas Historical Commission.



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

Figure 2: Resource #86, Citizens National Bank Building, 301 W. Knox St, (originally 303 W. Knox Street), from 1968 *Cicerone* (Ennis High School Yearbook).

**CITIZENS  
NATIONAL BANK**  
IN ENNIS



TO SERVE YOU!  
TO SERVE THE  
COMMUNITY

*Complete*  
**BANKING SERVICE**

LOANS ALL TYPES  
PERSONAL  
AUTOMOBILE  
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FARM & RANCH

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SAVINGS ACCOUNTS  
SAFE DEPOSIT BOXES  
TRAVELERS CHECKS  
TRUST DEPT.

DRIVE-IN WINDOW SERVICE

★

**DIAL 875-2631**

PHONE DALLAS - TA 6-5870

303 West Knox

ENNIS, TEXAS

Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Figure 3: Resource #87, ATM Building, northwest corner of North McKinney Street and West Ennis Avenue. View looking north. From Google Maps, image capture October 2013, retrieved July 18, 2018.



Image capture: Oct 2013 © 2018 Google

Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Figure 4: Resource # 88, 107 N. Sherman St., when it was occupied by Texas Fire Insurance Company. From 1953 *Cicerone* (Ennis High School Yearbook).



Pictured above is the home of the Texas Fire Insurance who congratulates the student body and faculty of Ennis High School on the creditable yearbook the progressive school produces.

## Texas Fire Insurance Company

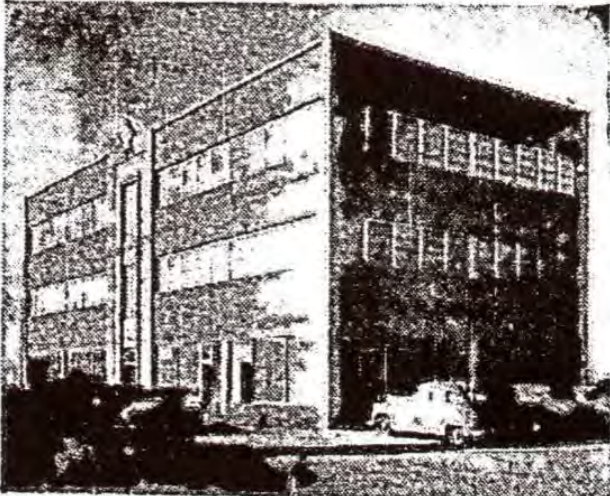


The entrance to the Texas Fire Building is a reminder that we are only too glad to be of assistance in the worthy projects of Ennis High School.

Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

Figure 5: Advertisement for 107 N. Sherman St. from *Dallas Morning News*, October 11, 1953.

*The Trend Toward Business Decentralization . . . Makes This the*  
**Biggest Business Property Value of the Year**  
*in Dallas' Metropolitan Area*



Here is a NEW,  
MODERN, FIREPROOF,  
AIR-CONDITIONED  
BUILDING . . .

*just 35 miles  
from Dallas*

in an up-and-coming modern  
small city where living costs  
and taxes are low and efficient  
personnel is plentiful at moderate wage.

Where commuting is large scale  
and where the distinctive advantages of suburban city economies combine with big city facilities . . . to qualify for the new trend in general office location.

TEXAS FIRE BUILDING, ENNIS, TEXAS, 35 miles  
via super highway from Dallas.

New 3-story steel and brick, 50x120 ft. (15,500 sq. ft.) with foundation to support additional floors.  
Air-conditioned, automatic elevators, centrally heated. Modern in every way.  
Ground floor affords excellent business rental space; 2nd floor, open space; 3rd floor divided into single, 2 and 3-room offices, suites and conference rooms.  
Easily adaptable to almost any kind of general offices.  
Built to afford maximum natural light for day; fluorescent lighted throughout for night operation.

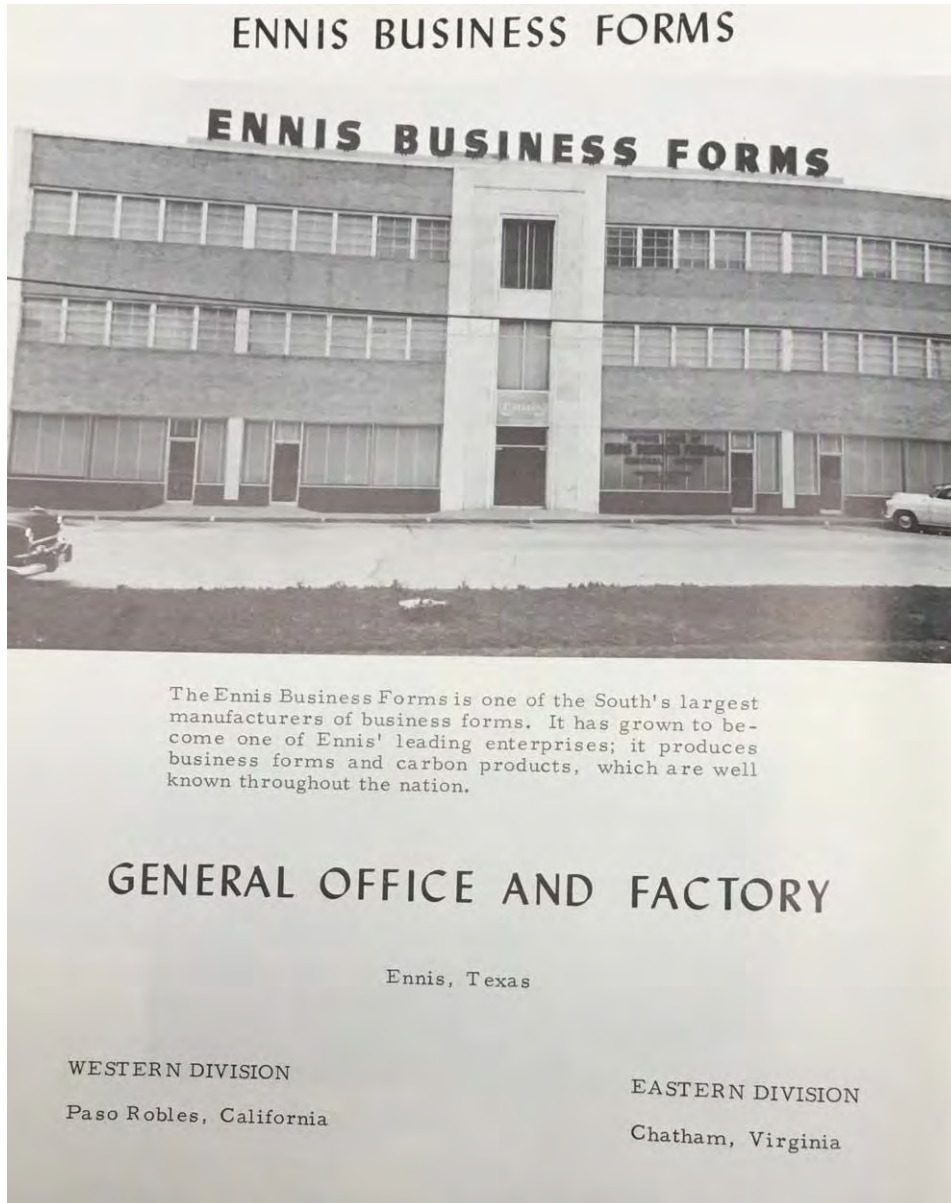
Inspection of the building and investigation of its splendid community background should convince the far-sighted business man that here, indeed, is a rare building opportunity ready for his immediate use or profitable investment.

Contact at once: WILL G. KNOX, Drawer L, Capitol Station,  
Austin, Texas, telephone 8-6679

Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Figure 6: 107 N. Sherman St. when it was occupied by Ennis Business Forms. From 1965 *Cicerone*, (Ennis High School Yearbook).



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Photo 1: Resource #84, Ennis Post Office, 205 N. McKinney St. Camera facing SW.



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Photo 2: Resources #84 and #85, Ennis Post Office and Postal Box Station (left side of photo), 205 N. McKinney St. Camera facing NW.



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Photo 3: Resource #86, Citizens National Bank Building (Bank of America), 301 W. Knox St (left) and addition (right). Camera facing SE.



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Photo 4: Resource #86, Citizens National Bank Building (Bank of America), east elevation, 301 W. Knox St. Camera facing SW.



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Photo 5: Resource #86, Citizens National Bank Building (Bank of America) addition, 303 W. Knox St. Camera facing SE.



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Photo 6: Resource #88, Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Building, 107 N. Sherman St. Camera facing NW.



Ennis Commercial Historic District (boundary increase), Ennis, Ellis County, Texas

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Photo 7: Resource #88, Texas Fire Insurance Company/Ennis Business Forms Building, 107 N. Sherman St. Camera facing SE.





UNITED STATES POST OFFICE

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PARKING







ROAD  
WORK  
AHEAD

*The Home*  
For Information  
214-219-4330

HANDICAP  
PARKING  
RAMP  
←





Building For Sale  
972-872-7000  
Accepting bids until June 16, 2017

ONE WAY



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action: Boundary Update

Property Name: Ennis Commercial Historic District (Boundary Increase)

Multiple Name: Ennis MRA

State & County: TEXAS, Ellis

Date Received: 1/31/2019      Date of Pending List: 2/12/2019      Date of 16th Day: 2/27/2019      Date of 45th Day: 3/18/2019      Date of Weekly List:

Reference number: BC100003468

Nominator: SHPO

Reason For Review:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appeal       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> PDIL | <input type="checkbox"/> Text/Data Issue    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> SHPO Request | <input type="checkbox"/> Landscape       | <input type="checkbox"/> Photo              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Waiver       | <input type="checkbox"/> National        | <input type="checkbox"/> Map/Boundary       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Resubmission | <input type="checkbox"/> Mobile Resource | <input type="checkbox"/> Period             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other        | <input type="checkbox"/> TCP             | <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 50 years |
|                                       | <input type="checkbox"/> CLG             |   |

Accept       Return       Reject      3/6/2019 Date

Abstract/Summary Comments: The Texas SHPO has provided sufficient information to support a minor expansion of the previously listed (1986, 2016 amended) Ennis Commercial Historic District. The Boundary Increase incorporates three new contributing buildings; in particular reflecting the district's expanded period of significance and acknowledging the important post-WWII growth of the downtown center and efforts to maintain the commercial viability of the city core.

Recommendation/ Criteria: Accept Boundary Increase (Criteria A & C)

Reviewer Paul Lusignan      Discipline Historian

Telephone (202)354-2229      Date 3/6/2019

DOCUMENTATION:      see attached comments : No      see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**

*real places telling real stories*

October 31, 2018

Mr. Daniel B. Delahaye  
Federal Preservation Officer  
United States Postal Service  
PO Box 23317  
Washington, DC 20026-3317

RE: Ennis Commercial Historic District, National Register Nomination amendment, Ellis Co., Texas

Dear Mr. Delahaye:

We are submitting an amendment to the Ennis Commercial Historic District National Register nomination to the National Park Service and are soliciting your review and comment.

The boundary increase area is comprised of 3 contributing and 2 noncontributing properties in downtown Ennis, Texas. The district was originally listed Criterion A in the areas of Commerce and under Criterion C in the area of Architecture as an intact collection of late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century commercial buildings that are reflective of local and national architectural trends during the period of significance (1883-1966).

**Contributing to the district is the 1915 Post Office** at 205 N. McKinney Street. A link to the full draft nomination (as submitted to the State Board of Review) can be found at:

<http://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/Ennis.pdf>

If you wish to comment, please send correspondence within 30 days to the Texas Historical Commission at the above referenced address, as well as a copy to Edson Beall of the National Register program at the National Park Service, at:

National Park Service  
National Register of Historic Places  
Mail Stop 7228  
1849 C Street, NW (2280)  
Washington, DC 20240

If you have any questions, please contact me at (512) 463-6013 or [greg.smith@thc.texas.gov](mailto:greg.smith@thc.texas.gov). Thank you for your participation in this review process.

Sincerely,



Gregory W. Smith  
National Register Coordinator

for Mark Wolfe, SHPO



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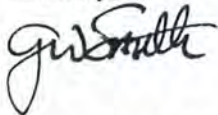
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Sincerely,



Gregory W. Smith  
National Register Coordinator

for Mark Wolfe, SHPO



**TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION**  
*real places telling real stories*

TO: Paul Lusignan  
 National Park Service  
 National Register of Historic Places  
 1849 C Street, NW, Mail Stop 7228  
 Washington, DC 20240

From: Mark Wolfe, SHPO  
 Texas Historical Commission

RE: Ennis Commercial Historic District (amendment to increase boundary), Ennis, Ellis Co., Texas

DATE: 1.28.19

The following materials are submitted:

X	Original National Register of Historic Places form on disk. The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the National Register of Historic Places nomination for the <i>Ennis Commercial Historic District (amendment to increase boundary)</i>
	Resubmitted nomination
X	Original NRHP signature page signed by the Texas SHPO
	Multiple Property Documentation form on disk
	Resubmitted form
	Original MPDF signature page signed by the Texas SHPO
X	CD with TIFF photograph files, KMZ files, and nomination PDF
X	Correspondence (notification letter to USPS)

COMMENTS:

- SHPO requests substantive review (cover letter from SHPO attached)
- The enclosed owner objections (do ) (do not ) constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:

